

Jill Leberknight

College Admissions Consultant and Acting Coach
Specializing in Young Performing Artists

A recent study published by the Princeton Review notes a considerable rise in college applications, a trend that has been increasing over the past 3 decades. Harvard and NYU have reported record early decision numbers for 2002 and expect 2003 to be no different.

The process of getting into the **college of your dreams**



has almost become a Fine Art these days. Enrollment at universities is climbing, SAT scores are at an all time high, the cost of tuition is rising, and application requirements are becoming frighteningly more narrow. With everything students have to consider it may seem to require a team of talent agents to stand out among the masses. Our high school seniors are often facing a scene that looks like David meeting the Goliath of Corporate America armed only with a number 2 pencil.

Special needs of the **performing artist**



Students who have already identified the performing arts for their post-secondary education face an entirely different application process. In addition to the customary and often detailed admission materials required by schools, the performing artist must also undergo an audition or entrance interview either in person or prepared on videotape. Some schools have detailed audition specifications that require the performer to prepare numerous selections. Prospective students also often need to contribute a resume or portfolio of work and in some instances participate in a workshop or day of extended interviews with the faculty. Because of the nature of this audition process it demands a considerable time and financial commitment for both the parent and student.

consider

During the 2003-04 academic year, college tuition and fees increased an average of \$579 at four-year public institutions, \$1,114 at four-year private institutions, and \$231 at two-year public institutions. In 2002-03, \$105 billion was distributed in student financial aid — a record amount, which was \$13 billion more than was distributed the previous year.

- College board 10/21/03

Women outnumber men right now in our colleges and universities according to the National Association of College Admission Counselors. 80% of the American population have achieved a high school degree or higher and 24% have earned bachelor degrees.



In a survey conducted by the NACAC, 76% of institutions reported a college preparatory course as of **considerable importance** in the college admission process.

- National Association of College Admissions Counselors (NACAC)

Questions to ask

- Do I want a liberal arts education (BA) or conservatory training (BFA)?
- Does the school I prefer have any professional affiliations?
- What are the graduates of this school doing right now in the field?
- What are the credentials of the faculty?
- Do I want a classically oriented program or one that includes contemporary studies such as film?
- Where do I want to live for the next four years?
- Am I looking for scholarships and grants to help fund my tuition?
- Do I want to attend a school that has a graduate program in the same field?



The answers to questions like these require the young artist to examine their future goals, lifestyle, and personality in a way that the average college-bound student will not.

What I do

As a college admissions consultant it is my wish to alleviate much of the anxiety facing young artists at this important crossroads in their life. Over the past 20 years I've been through this process myself many times as a student, performer, and educator. I will bring my knowledge, lessons learned, and perspective in the field of arts education to the table for your family to use. I help students to identify education and career goals. I provide counseling so that the student can select a school that suits their needs and I assist them in building their admission portfolio. I recommend audition material and coach students in how to present it as well as prepare them for interviews, talent scholarships, and college visits.



What is at stake today is no less than career and economic opportunities that will last a lifetime. A four-year college degree can result in an additional \$500,000 in income over the student's working career. Over 70% of the entry level jobs in the workforce today require education beyond high school. Almost half of the students with just a high school diploma, will fall below the poverty level in years to come. **While college costs are high, the value of a college degree has never been greater.**

- College Planning Network (CPN)



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An actor in varied professional settings for over 20 years and enthusiastic teacher of theatre, Ms. Leberknight has taught for some of the top performing arts organizations in Austin and on the East Coast where she grew up. She believes in a strong educational foundation based on learning technique and strives to help students build their "traveling suitcase of performing tools." She holds a BA from Penn State University and an MFA from the University of Texas at Austin.

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